(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government has taken any decision for inclusion of farmers in the scheme who have taken loan from private moneylenders; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (f) The Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme for farmers, announced in the Union Budget 2008-09, stipulates waiver of all loans disbursed by State Cooperative Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Credit Societies before 31.03.2003, that were overdue on 31.12.2007 and which remained unpaid until 29.02.2008 for small farmers (land holding between 1 and 2 hectares) and marginal farmers (land holding upto 1 hectare). In respect of other farmers (land holding more than 2 hectares), there is a One Time Settlement (OTS) Scheme for all loans that were overdue on 31.12.2007 and which remained unpaid until 29.02.2008. The OTS provides a rebate of 25% against payment of the balance amount of 75%.

The guidelines, which are in the process of being drafted, will be issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to enable the implementation of the Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme by June 30,2008.

Closure of private company operated petrol-pumps

†*568. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of petrol-pumps set up by private companies in the country, so far;

(b) whether it is a fact that the petrol-pumps run by the private companies are being closed down due to incurring of losses;

(c) if so, the number of petrol-pumps that have been closed down from 1st February, 2008 till date alongwith the details thereof, company-wise and State-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by Government so that consumers do not suffer?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) As on 1.04.2008, private sector companies have set up 2632 Retail Outlets (ROs) in the country.

(b) and (c) Essar Oil Limited (EOL) and Shell India Marketing Private Limited (SIMPL) have not clossed their ROs. Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has informed that sales at their retail outlets (ROs) are negligible due to selling price differential between private and public sector ROs, leading to the closure of all their 1432 ROs in the country with effect from 15.03.2008 as per details given in the Statement (*See* below).

The prices of sensitive petroleum products are fixed by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in consultation with the Government. Private oil companies are not subject to pricing restrictions by the Government and are free to take their pricing decisions on commercial considerations.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) Public Sector OMCs are marketing various petroleum products through their 34,304 ROs located throughout the country to protect the interests of the consumers. They also plan to set up 1830 more ROs in the year 2008-09.

Statement

State-wise details of Commissioned ROs

Region	State	No. of ROs Commissioned
West	Gujarat	246
	Madhya Pradesh	93
	Chhattisgarh	18
	Maharashtra	160
North	Punjab	78
	Haryana	46
	Himachal Pradesh	7
	Uttar Pradesh	132
	Uttarakhand	11
	Rajasthan	107
South	Tamil Nadu	95
	Karnataka	80
	Andhra Pradesh	129
	Kerala	44
East	West Bengal	49
	Assam	26
	Meghalaya	7
	Nagaland	1
	Bihar	25
	Jharkhand	35
	Orissa	42
	Tripura	1
	GRAND TOTAL:	1432

Agreement between NTPC and RIL

*569. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) agreement for supply of natural gas to its power plants;

(b) whether RIL had abandoned the agreement reached with NTPC earlier, and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government to ensure that the agreement is honoured by both the companies?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) In the year 2002, NTPC invited bids under International Competitive Bidding (ICB) route for procurement of gas @ 132 Trillion British Thermal Units (Tbtu) per annum for a period of 17 years. Many leading national and international bidders participated in the bidding After the qualification process, the Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in April, 2003.